

**United States Environmental Protection Agency
Criminal Investigation Division
Investigative Activity Report**

Case Number:

1000-0494

Case Title:

Cooke Aquaculture Fish Farm Release

Subject of Report:

2017-11-22 Interview of [REDACTED]

Reporting Office:

Seattle, WA, Area Office

Activity Date:

November 22, 2017

Reporting Official and Date:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

05-DEC-2017, Signed by: [REDACTED]

Approving Official and Date:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
07-DEC-2017, Approved by: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] e

SYNOPSIS

On November 22, 2017, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] regarding his knowledge of the activities of
July 24, 2017.

DETAILS

On November 22, 2017, [REDACTED] and I interviewed
[REDACTED], regarding his knowledge of the activities of July 24, 2017.
After being notified of the identity of the interviewing agent and the nature of the interview, [REDACTED], in
substance, provided the following information:

[REDACTED]

On July 24, 2017, the Millennium Star and its crew were docked at Anacortes, Washington. At approximately 2130 hours, he received contact from Harley Marine dispatch that there was a loose barge near Cypress Island, Washington. He knew of the existence of the net pens in the area but at the time thought it was a loose barge. He held a crew briefing about the activity that they were about to complete and proceeded to Cypress Island.

At approximately 2230 hours, he had the Millennium Star on scene and observed that the loose barge was, in fact, one of the net pens. A small skiff with two net pen personnel came to the Millennium Star and explained that the net pen had broken loose from its moorings. The personnel requested that the Millennium Star push on the net pen and move it back in place. He explained to the net pen personnel that the Millennium Star would not be able to push the net pen as it would run over the top of the net pen. The Millennium Star has approximately 4,000 horsepower and would slide over the top of the net pen, rather than pushing it. He noticed two other small vessels in the area, one a small tug and another flat deck vessel with a crane. The net pen personnel explained to him that the net pen needs to be held in place as it broke loose from its moorings. They further explained that there was approximately eleven million dollars in salmon contained within the net pen.

He allowed the Millennium Star's [REDACTED], to board the net pen skiff and determine if there is a way for the Millennium Star to assist the net pen. [REDACTED] believed that a bridle could be fabricated and the Millennium Star could pull on the net pens through attachment to the bridle. He agreed to the plan

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and the Millennium Star was hooked to the net pens.

His crew began their four-hour shifts for working with the net pen. The personnel of the net pen would request the vessel to pull on the structure occasionally. This did not require much power, but the Millennium Star was hooked to the net pen for approximately four days. The Millennium Star was keeping the net pen in place and straight and occasionally the vessel would move the net pen at the request of the net pen personnel. Because of the changing currents, the vessel would have to adjust power as he believed to keep the net pen structure from “folding up.”

On July 25, 2017, the net pen personnel were evacuating all the equipment such as the feed lines and generators on the structure including the personnel. The net pen was moving up and down due to the strong tidal changes. He believed that the net pen structure was going to fold up on itself at any time because he only saw two working anchors on the north side where the Millennium Star was attached. Combined with the southern anchors all in place, he thought it would cause the net pen to collapse north to south. When the tidal forces ebbed, the net pen personnel came back aboard the net pen to recover more equipment.

On that same date the Millennium Star became entangled in some of the broken lines of the net pen. This forced some divers to come to the assistance of the Millennium Star and remove the obstructions. During this time, another tug, owned by [REDACTED] was located on the net pen.

At one point, the net pen personnel requested that the Millennium Star move to the east side of the net pens and hold the structure from that side. During his time on this assignment one of the net pen personnel told him that the cause of the net pen failure was heavy tides and that the company purchased the net pens the year prior.

On approximately July 27, 2017, he witnessed the net pen personnel attach multiple anchors approximately seven in a single day, followed by an additional seven the next day. Several times they attempted to turn the net pen into the current, but they could not complete that activity. The Millennium Star could not get close to the west side as they were too close to Cypress Island. They also attempted to turn the net pen to face parallel with Cypress Island, but it was not possible.

He later saw the net pen personnel cleaning the nets and begin to feed the fish in the pens. He estimates the Millennium Star was attached to the structure between three and one half and four days.

All his activities are recorded within the Millennium Star’s logbook.

Agent Note: During the interview, [REDACTED] were present and provided additional industry information, but no information about the incident.

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